

# Brazos River & Associated Bay & Estuary – Bay and Basin Stakeholder Committee

## MEMO

To: Brazos River BBASC

From: Tom Michel, Chair – Funding Sub-Committee

Re: January 2012 Committee Report

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The Funding Subcommittee was formed by the following volunteers to make recommendations back to the full BBASC regarding the needs of the BBASC and funding options: David Blackburn, Phil Ford, Gena Leathers, Ed Lowe, Keith Pate, Matt Philips, and Bruce Turner, with Gregg Easley coordinating the calls and giving information and advice in the process. The group met by conference call on Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> and Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>, as well as sharing many thoughts and comments by email. We focused on 1) what needs the BBASC has, 2) what the anticipated costs of those needs are, and 3) how can the BBASC fund those needs. The following is a summary of our recommendations:

### NEEDS

We identified three main areas of need: Technical Assistance, Meeting Facilitation, and Report Writing. Some technical assistance may be available from the BBEST or its individual members, but their continued support will likely be focused on educating us about their BBEST report to us. Kirk Kennedy can run FRAT models that simulate flow regimes and describe the effects on the environment and current and/or proposed water projects. That work is not part of the BBEST report and would be work the BBASC would conduct through consultants. Until we really get into the BBEST report, we will not truly know what technical assistance we will need.

Facilitation of our meetings is a prime concern. With the short time we have to complete our goal (March-September) and this many people and the vastly different perspectives, it will be imperative that we operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. All but one BBASC to date, has used a facilitator. The sub-committee felt it the best route and recommends bringing on a facilitator before the March meeting to allow us to get started quickly. I have been in contact with Suzanne Schwartz from UT Law School to gauge cost and logistics of hiring a facilitator. Suzanne conducted the facilitation in the Trinity/San Jacinto and one other BBASC and is very knowledgeable of this process. The other option for us would be to “self-facilitate,” which can be tricky and may erode our internal facilitator’s ability to represent his/her perspective.

Report Writing may seem far off, but from beginning to end, we really only have 6 months. Backing up from September, a draft will need to be submitted to the full BBASC at least by August (probably earlier). Putting pen to paper can take many days/weeks and then edits can take more days/weeks. Without someone stepping up and volunteering to be the scribe and several BBASC members stepping up to be on a small idea/editing committee, we will need to bring in a writer. One BBASC hired the Texas Water Resource Institute for that purpose.

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### COSTS

We do not have solid numbers to base estimated costs for the three main needs but a minimal budget would total to a minimum of roughly \$50,000. We do have several previous BBASC efforts to gauge Brazos River BBASC costs. The Sabine BBASC did most everything “in-house” and therefore we have no specific cost information, while the Colorado BBASC raised \$100k or so by “passing-the-hat.” The Trinity/San Jacinto BBASC hired a facilitator from funds obtained by 2 larger grants, totaling about \$25,000. The group agreed that Report Writing was the 3<sup>rd</sup> priority and focused on facilitation services first, although there was plenty of discussion on what type of technical assistance we would like. I spoke with Suzanne Schwartz about their efforts with previous BBASCs and got the feeling that \$25k-\$35k would be needed for facilitation needs depending on how much we wanted them to do. As for technical assistance, we may have some continued help from the BBEST members but still will have other technical needs not addressed in the BBEST report – cost \$5k-\$10k. The TWRI, from Texas A&M charged one BBASC \$5k to write their report but found that the real cost was closer to \$20k. As for report writing, if a third party is hired to write the report, the cost could easily add another \$10k-\$20k. Therefore, I believe that the Brazos BBASC will need to raise \$50k-\$65k to address technical, facilitation, and report writing needs.

### FUNDING

There are basically two methods for funding: grants and pass-the-hat. A couple of folks looked into potential grants, turning up nothing. January is just not the time of the year to hunt for last minute grants. Passing the hat has worked in other BBASCs, raising \$100k or so. For the low end of the estimated range, we would need about \$50k. Simple math, based on 25 members suggests \$2,000 for each BBASC member to come up with from their representative group. There are challenges any way we proceed, but passing the hat seemed to be the only real opportunity to fund this effort. The sub-committee drafted a letter that the whole BBASC could sign. That letter could be used to solicit contributions from entities we each represent. We have provided a copy for your thoughts. If there are any grant opportunities that we become aware of to lessen our per member cost, we would like the blessing of the BBASC to pursue them without further BBASC action.

There are still a few logistics to work out in a pass the hat funding method. Namely, the BBASC is not a formal entity and cannot contract. Therefore an entity would need to be the contracting entity to any consultants and have the ability to collect and account for contributions, as well as keep an accounting of expenses.